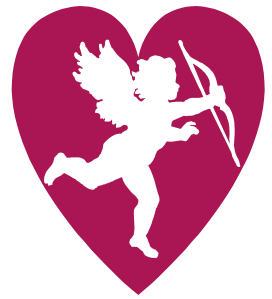


HRO HIGHLIGHTS and TRAINING NOTES



Human Resources Office

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/>

February 2001



Important Employee Action Items

**Human Resources Service
Center Contacts**
(See Page 9 for details)

NRL'S 2001 Retirement Seminar

**22-23 March &
3-4 April**
POC: Roxanne Drake
X767-6737

Announcement of Awards
(See Page 10 for details)

**Upcoming Training
Dates**
(See Page 11 for details)

NRL DEMO on the web at
[http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/hr-
demo/](http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/hr-demo/)

What's New on the Employee Relations Web Site

Code 1850

You can benefit from checking out the Employee Relations menu at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/-ERMENU.htm>.



For instance, by clicking on Absences, Leave and Flexitime, you can access Government-wide and NRL policies and procedures that govern all aspects of these topics. This includes annual/sick leave, annual leave donations, tardiness, hazardous weather and other administrative excusals, maternity/ paternity absences, court leave, Family & Medical Leave Act, leave without pay (LWOP), flexitime, working at home

in special situations, and more. Employees can find help on special subjects, such as how taking leave without pay or working part-time affect health and life insurance, retirement, Thrift Savings Plan and other benefits. In addition, supervisors can find help in dealing with attendance problems by employees, including sample letters they can download, revise, and issue to employees. The site includes links to SF-71, Request for Leave, and related OPM sites, including the site that is used to notify employees when the Federal Government shuts down due to snow or ice.

The following are some new additions to the Health/Life Insurance; Retirement/TSP page:

Continued...

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*****New Articles of Interest*****

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- Benefits information for employees contemplating resignation or transfer
- Use of early authorities for downsizing
- Court-Ordered benefits for former spouses
- Message to employees who made a health benefits open season enrollment or change
- Federal employees retirement calculator
- How LWOP affects your government benefits
- Benefits forms/brochures/pamphlets locations
- Impact of leave without pay on employee benefits

The NRL SEAP Program Wants You.....To Be a Mentor



*Dawn Brown
Code 1850*

NRL participates in the Science and Engineering Apprentice Program (SEAP) during the summer in cooperation with the George Washington University. SEAP offers select high school and college students a unique opportunity to explore and pursue careers in science and technology by opening to them NRL's vast, varied resources and by allowing students to spend eight weeks working full-time on unclassified tasks under the direction of NRL scientists and engineers.

The Summer 2001 SEAP has been scheduled for 25 June through 17 August 2001. The SEAP Coordinator is currently looking for scientists and engineers who are interested in providing enriching summer, science experiences to these talented young people. As a volunteer SEAP Mentor, you would be helping to ensure NRL's future.

During this eight-week summer apprenticeship, mentors guide promising high school students through tasks that are not only meaningful and educational, but are also designed to make useful contributions to current projects.

To become an NRL-DC volunteer SEAP mentor, complete a SEAP Mentor Application form, available at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/> or call Dawn Brown on (202) 767-2957. If you or someone you know would like to know more about the responsibilities and benefits of becoming a SEAP Mentor, please contact Dawn Brown, NRL SEAP Coordinator at 767-2957. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible. The submission date is earlier this year as George Washington University plans to make student applications available for on-line selection by early March. Mentors can become active in this program up to the beginning date of the summer SEAP session; however, you are urged to apply early for the best student selection. If you would like to talk to other NRL scientists and engineers about their SEAP mentoring experiences, contact Dawn Brown, and she will connect you with past participants.

The SEAP program is also available at NRL-SSC; however, it is administered independent of the NRL-DC program and may have procedures differing from the NRL-DC program. To become a SEAP Mentor at the Stennis Space Center, please contact Becky Rotundo on (228) 688-5328 or email becky.rotundo@nrlssc.navy.mil.



Black History Month



Black History Month is observed in February with a wide variety of events highlighting the contributions of African-Americans to the nation's

history. This celebration dates back to 1976, though an earlier version, Negro History Week, was established by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926. Woodson was a scholar with a Harvard Ph. D. whose parents were slaves. His life's work was the study of the African experience throughout the world. In 1915, Woodson established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History), which sponsors Black History Month.



HRO HIGHLIGHTS

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Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Announcements



The TSP recently made the following announcements:

On December 21, 2000, President Clinton signed the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001. This law includes a provision that increases incrementally the contribution limits to the TSP for participants covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Beginning with the May 15, 2001, open season, with elections becoming effective in July 2001, FERS employees may elect to contribute up to 11 percent of their basic pay; CSRS employees may elect to contribute up to 6 percent. Effective January 2002 and each following year, the contribution limits will increase by one percent until January 2006, at which time they will be eliminated completely.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) annual deferral limit (\$10,500 for 2001) remains in effect. There is also no impact on either the Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions or on the Agency Matching Contributions.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Facts Booklet

You can find the new "FEHB Facts" booklet on the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) web site at <http://www.opm.gov/insure> (click on health insurance). This booklet offers information on the FEHB Program, such as how to enroll, eligibility issues, and much more.

On October 27, 2000, President Clinton signed Public Law 106-361, which provided for immediate participation in the TSP for newly hired employees and rehired employees. This provision applies only to employee contributions; agency contributions remain on the current open season waiting period schedule. The TSP intends to implement this new benefit in conjunction with the May 15, 2001, open season, with elections becoming effective in July 2001.

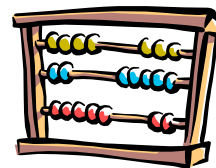
Public Law 361 also permits the TSP to accept rollovers from qualified retirement plans and conduit Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) that were set up to accept distributions from qualified retirement plans. This benefit will be available to participants in mid-2001; a more precise date will be announced in early 2001. Agencies will **not** be involved in the process because participants will deal directly with the TSP Service Office. Once implemented, the rollover form will be available from the TSP web site or through the TSP Service Office.

For continuing information on the many changes being made by the TSP, visit web site www.tsp.gov.

Federal Employees Retirement Calculator

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) have launched the Federal Employees Retirement Calculator on the SSA's Access for Seniors web site at <http://www.seniors.gov/fed-calc.html>. With this calculation model you can compute an estimate of your Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), CSRS Offset and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirement benefits – normal, early or disability – as well as an estimate of your future Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Social Security benefits.

This model gives a very accurate estimate of your benefits. **However**, if you have temporary or military service, or took a refund of your retirement contributions that you have not repaid, the estimate you compute may be higher than your actual benefits. Contact the Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE) to learn how such service may affect your benefits.



Retirement Contributions Lowered

President Clinton signed Public Law 106-346, which rolls back the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) withholdings rates to those in effect before 1999. The new lower rates were effective on January 14, 2001, for employees, and are as follows:

CSRS Regular	7.0
CSRS Offset	0.8%
FERS Regular	0.8%

Annual Limit on Employee Contributions to the TSP



The annual limit on tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions for the year 2001 is \$10,500. Accordingly, TSP participants may not make employee contributions of more than \$10,500 to their TSP accounts in 2001. If you are a high-salaried employee (for example, you earn more than \$105,000 per year), and are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), you should consider the annual contribution limit when deciding how much you will contribute to your TSP account each pay period.

If you reach the annual limit before the end of the year, your contributions **and** your agency matching contributions will stop. The amount you could lose in agency matching contributions would, in all likelihood, be far greater than the value of the added earnings you might receive by making employee contributions sooner. To maximize your contributions, you need to estimate how much money will have been contributed based on your current TSP election. Subtract that amount from the annual limit and divide the remainder by the number of pay periods remaining in the pay year so that you are contributing a whole dollar amount. This will allow you to receive the maximum agency matching contributions currently available to you.

A TSP Fact Sheet entitled Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals and the 2001 Elective Deferral Limit is available to all employees. This TSP Fact Sheet includes a worksheet that affected employees may use to determine the amount they must contribute each pay period to receive the maximum amount of agency matching contributions. TSP Fact Sheets may be obtained from the

TSP web site www.tsp.gov and the following locations:

NRL-DC: NRL Forms Store, Building 222, Room 174

NRL-SSC: Building 1007, Room 37

NRL-MRY: Administrative Office

Employees may contact the Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE) if they have further questions.

Social Security Information

The following information was recently received by the DoD Field Advisory Services from a representative of the Social Security Administration (SSA).

- Social Security earnings from the prior year take about 5 or 6 months to post to SSA records. Earnings for 1999 were completed the week of June 19, 2000.
- When applying for benefits, individuals should **ALWAYS** take their W-2 Form(s) for the prior year to verify earnings.
- When an individual has military service in their employment history and chooses to apply for any benefits under the SSA, the individual's Social Security Card and DD Form 214 are required.
- Direct deposit is a statutory requirement for receipt of Social Security checks. However, since full compliance is not complete, in some cases individuals may receive checks through the mail.
- SSA officials recommend that individuals seeking social security benefits contact the SSA early, before their potential eligibility. Specifically, they recommend contact at least three months prior to eligibility. This advance notice period will facilitate the determination of applicable benefits, application procedures, and collection of necessary documents.

- When an individual changes their name, as is the case of a change in marital status or other proceedings, the social security number (SSN) stays the same.
- If SSN is under different names, the SSA will have a separate record for each name. In such cases, the SSA will send out correspondence to the individual of record. If there is no response, the SSA will not combine the contributions or the files. The SSA has indicated that there are about 420 billion dollars in contributions being held in abeyance, pending confirmation of entitlements.

Additional information regarding Social Security benefits can be found at web site <http://www.ssa.gov>.



Notice To Bargaining Unit Employees

*Lynn Granados
Code 1850*

The following notice is provided for the benefit of bargaining unit (BU) employees:

Under the provisions of Section 7114(a)(2) of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (5 USC Chapter 71), your union must be given the opportunity to be represented at any examination of a BU employee by a management representative in connection with an investigation if:

- (1) The (BU) employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against that employee; and
- (2) The (BU) employee requests representation.

The collective bargaining agreement for your BU may give you additional rights in these situations.

Annual Leave Policies

Lynn Granados
Code 1850



January 14, 2001 marked the beginning of a new annual leave year. Leave is provided to allow employees an annual vacation and other periods of time off to attend to personal business and emergency situations.

Carrying over annual leave.

The leave year starts at the beginning of the first full pay period in each calendar year. With rare exceptions, the maximum amount of leave that may be accumulated and carried forward from leave year to leave year is 30 days (240 hours) for non-Senior Executive Service (SES) employees and 90 days (720 hours) for SES employees. Many employees have saved their leave so that they maintain a constant 30-day carry over. To those employees, this leave is like money in the bank. It provides a level of security to deal with personal emergencies that can prevent them from working. Because the value of the leave increases with the employee's salary, it constitutes a lump-sum "nest egg" for employees when they separate through retirement, resignation or other means.

Scheduling and approving leave.

Employees and management share a mutual responsibility to plan and schedule the use of leave throughout the year. Although leave credits are earned as a legal right, determining when annual leave can be taken and in what amount is an administrative matter resting with management. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that leave is scheduled to avoid unnecessary work backlogs and the need for overtime work. They are also responsible for scheduling the workload to prevent annual forfeiture of earned leave credits that exceed 240 hours.

Employees are responsible for cooperating with supervisors in scheduling vacations and other time off during periods when their services can best be spared.

Work requirements and fair, considerate treatment of employees are the factors in supervisory

approval of leave requests. Government policy states that leave will be granted freely for personal or emergency purposes when employees can be spared from their duties. However, the final decision as to the amount and duration of time off rests with the supervisor. Although supervisors may not require employees to take leave, they may deny leave use when an employee's personal wishes conflict with legitimate work requirements. In addition, where emergency conditions require maximum attendance, employees may be required to forego scheduled vacation plans or other periods of previously approved leave until such time as their services can be spared.

Restored annual leave.

The 30-day maximum annual leave carry over may be temporarily suspended when demands of the job take precedence over previously scheduled leave. To be considered for restoration, the leave must have been requested and approved for use in writing before the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year. This does not minimize the supervisor's and employee's continuing responsibility to schedule annual leave during the year to avoid situations where employees approach the end of the leave year with a significant amount of leave that must be used or forfeited.

Recording annual leave.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that leave is properly recorded. When the supervisor (or designee) certifies a timekeeping document, he or she is certifying that the employee spent the time indicated conducting official Government business or was off duty on approved leave. False time-recording entries constitute misconduct that can result in disciplinary action.

Questions regarding NRL leave policies/procedures should be directed to supervisors and division administrative offices. Administrative offices that require interpretation of policies/procedures may contact the NRL Employee Relations Branch on (202) 767-2364 or DSN 297-2364. ONR employees should contact the ONR Employee Relations Branch on (703) 696-3620 or DSN 426-3620.

Dealing with the Winter Blues

Ralph Surette,
Ph.D.

Counseling & Referral
Psychologist



Depression is not a subject we ordinarily like to think about. In spite of this fact, depression is relatively common and occurs in about 15 percent of the population. For many, a major depression will occur at least once in their lifetime, while for many others a milder and briefer form of depression will occur. This milder form is often triggered by a significant loss, such as a job or a loved one, or by the seemingly endless short days and long nights of winter.

The symptoms: preoccupation with how sad one feels; loss of interest in pleasure and enjoyment; changes in appetite and/or sleeping patterns; agitation; irritability; decreased energy; feelings of worthlessness; and, in general, a feeling that it doesn't make any difference what I do, I'm just not going to feel better!

Well, the good news is that you can begin to feel better. Help and guidance is available. You do not have to deal with depression or "the blues" all by yourself! Treatment for depression (medication and counseling) has a very high success rate.

At the NRL-DC site you may call for confidential counseling at 767-6857. NRL-SSC employees may call (288) - 688-4518, and NRL-MRY employees may call 1-800-523-5668.



Court-Ordered Benefits for Former Spouses

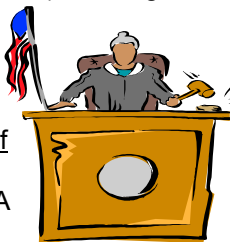


A court order related to a divorce or separation can:

- Divide a Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuity. The court order must expressly direct the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to pay a portion of the monthly CSRS or FERS benefits. The spouse's share must be stated as a fixed amount, a percentage or a fraction of the annuity, or by a formula whose value is readily apparent from the face of the order and information in OPM's files. The amount cannot exceed the amount payable to the retiree after deductions for taxes and insurance. Payments to a former spouse from a retiree's annuity end with the retiree's death. For the former spouse to receive payments after the retiree's death, the retiree must elect, or the court order must provide for, a survivor annuity.
- Divide a refund of CSRS or FERS employee retirement contributions. A court order may provide for all or part of a refund of employee retirement contributions to be paid to the former spouse. A court order also may block payment of a refund, but only if the order directs OPM not to pay the refund and the order also grants a survivor annuity or a portion of a retiree annuity to a legally separated or former spouse.
- Provide a survivor annuity payable upon the death of an employee or retiree. A monthly annuity may be payable to a former spouse after the death of the employee or annuitant if provided by court order. In

addition, a retiring employee may voluntarily elect a full or partial annuity to provide a former spouse survivor annuity. However, if the employee has remarried, this election may only be made if the current spouse consents to it. A court-ordered survivor annuity is not available unless the marriage lasted at least 9 months. A former spouse survivor annuity ends if the former spouse remarries before becoming age 55. If death occurs as an employee, a court-ordered survivor benefit is payable to a former spouse if the employee completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service, and dies while under the CSRS or FERS retirement coverage. Under CSRS, survivor annuity is payable. Under FERS, a lump sum death benefit is payable, and a survivor annuity is also payable if the employee has 10 years of creditable service.

- Permit a former spouse to continue coverage under the Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. A former spouse who is awarded a portion of a CSRS or FERS annuity or a survivor annuity by a qualifying court order, even though the benefit is not payable, may be eligible to enroll for health benefits coverage under the FEHB Program. Note that the former spouse is **not** eligible to retain coverage under the employee's family enrollment. FEHB coverage may also be temporarily continued under the Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) authority.
- Require an employee or retiree to assign his or her Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) coverage to a former spouse or children or direct the payment of FEGLI benefits. A



order may require assignment of FEGLI benefits to a former spouse or children.

Assigning benefits transfers ownership of FEGLI coverage to the assignee. The individual who makes the assignment no longer has control over the insurance coverage and can no longer designate beneficiaries. Assignment is irrevocable and applies to Basic, Option A, and Option B insurance. The Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI) must pay benefits in accordance with the terms of a valid court decree of divorce, annulment, or legal separation, or the terms of a court order or court-approved property settlement agreement relating to such a court decree, regardless of whether the insured individual actually completes a designation complying with the court order. To be valid, the court order must be a certified copy and must be received by the appropriate office since July 22, 1998 and before the insured's death and it must expressly provide for someone to receive your FEGLI benefits. (Contact the Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE) for the appropriate office address.) If a valid court order is in effect, the insured individual cannot change his/her designation, unless the person(s) named in the court order agrees in writing or unless the court order is later modified.

- Require payment from a participant's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account to someone other than the participant, such as the participant's spouse or former spouse. The TSP Board calls these orders "Retirement Benefits Court Orders". Such orders will be honored if they are issued in connection with a divorce, annulment, or legal separation and if they meet the requirements of the Board's regulations. A qualifying order must require payment to a person other than the participant.

Continued...

Court Ordered Benefits...

Continued...

Payment must be made to the participant's current or former spouse, the attorney for the current or former spouse, the dependent children of the participant, other dependents of the participant, or the attorney for the participant's dependent children or other dependents. Payment cannot be made to any person from whom the participant can eventually gain access to the money. Furthermore, the Board will not honor an award asking for payment to be made jointly, such as to the former spouse and children. The order should separately specify the award to be made to each person. The Board will not honor an award asking that payment be made to creditors of the parties to the divorce.

Additional details regarding court orders that relate to retirement or insurance may be found on the OPM's web site <http://www.opm.gov>. For information on court orders that relate to TSP, go to the TSP's web site <http://www.tsp.gov>.



President's Day
February 19th

OPM Guidance on Sexual Orientation Discrimination

Lynn Granados
Code 1850

The following is information on the guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on sexual orientation discrimination in federal civilian employment. Such discrimination violates Executive Order 13087, which added sexual orientation to the list of categories for which discrimination is prohibited. This addition did not add any enforcement rights, such as the right to file a discrimination complaint based on sexual orientation or coverage under affirmative action plans. However, employees do have the right to seek protection from the Office of Special Counsel by filing a written claim alleging a prohibited personnel practice (PPP) has occurred. OPM's guidance, as well as comprehensive information on the appropriate procedures for filing a PPP with OSC, may be found on the OPM web site www.opm.gov. Employees may also choose to file a grievance through NRL's Employee Relations Branch because of an action alleged to have occurred based on someone's sexual orientation.

For employees not in a bargaining unit (BU) more information on the grievance process may be found in NRLINST 12771.1B of 20 October 1998, Grievance Procedures. Employees in a BU should consult their contract. Lastly, employees may feel free to contact someone in either the Employee Relations Branch at 767-2364, or the EEO Branch on 767-5264 for confidential guidance and/or additional information.

On-the-Job Injury Website



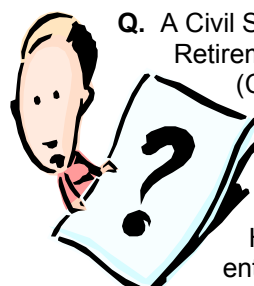
Roxanne E. Drake
Injury Compensation
Program Manager
(Code 1850)

The NRL Human Resources Office website (with links to the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP)) provides you with a wealth of information concerning **on-the-job injuries**. Information includes NRL procedures for claiming injuries, payment of compensation, leave buy back procedures, forms, frequently asked questions, and much more. Below are just a few of the frequently asked questions you may find answers to on the website:

- What do I do after I'm injured on the job?
- What is the difference between Traumatic Injury and Occupational Illness?
- What are my rights?
- What is the importance of reporting to the Medical Clinic?
- How do I collect benefits that I am entitled to?
- How can I ensure my medical bills will get paid?
- What are my responsibilities as a supervisor when an injury has occurred?
- What is Continuation of Pay (COP)?
- What is Leave Buy Back?

For information concerning the NRL Injury Compensation Program, please call Roxanne Drake at 767-6737; DSN 297-6737, or visit the NRL website http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/injur_pg.htm.

We've Been Asked



Q. A Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employee died with 48 years of Federal service. His spouse is entitled to an annuity equal to 55% of his basic annuity. What happens to the excess contributions?

A. The CSRS has a maximum annuity of 80% of the high-3 average salary, which is normally reached at 41 years, 11 months of service. The contributions during this excess time, approximately six years, would be refunded to the annuitant. In this case, the employee died in service, the survivor is entitled to 55% of the 80% base annuity and the excess contributions will be paid to the employee's beneficiary in a lump sum. If the employee has not designated a beneficiary for lump-sum retirement contributions, his spouse would receive the money under the natural order of precedence that applies to Government benefits.

Q. An employee died, leaving a dependent/disabled child under age 18. The child is eligible for a child's survivor annuity. When will the child's annuity end?

A. The disabled child's annuity will terminate on the last day of the month preceding the month in which the disabled child gets married, recovers from the disability, becomes capable of self-support or dies. If the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determines that the child has become capable of self-support, the annuity will continue until age 22 if the child is a full-time student. If the child's annuity ends because he/she recovers from a disability or becomes capable of self-support, the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) law does not allow the annuity to be reinstated even if the

disability recurs or the child becomes incapable of self-support again. However, Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) law allows reinstatement of benefits to a disabled child over age 18 if OPM determines that the child has again become incapable of self-support.

NRL'S 2001 Retirement Seminar

**22-23 March
Guest Speaker
Dave Redden**

**3-4 April
Guest Speaker
Karen Schaeffer**

**POC: Roxanne Drake
767-6737**

Visit The Human Resources Office (HRO) On the Internet

*Roxanne E. Drake
Code 1850*

Do you have too much paper on your desk? Are you tired of calling, walking, or driving to the Human Resource Office (HRO) every time you have a personnel question? Have you lost your health insurance brochure? Do you need to refer to an old HRO Highlights and Training Notes publication? Are you confused about the NRL Demonstration Project and how it affects you? If you answered Yes! to any of these questions, then the HRO Web site is for you! In an effort to keep you abreast of personnel information, you can access HR information from the Web. We are sure you will find the NRL HRO Homepage at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/> most informative. It is also accessible from the Executive Directorate/ Human Resources Office, Code 1800, organizational link off the NRL Homepage.

From the homepage menu, you can find valuable personnel information such as: job vacancies, relocation benefits, student program information, procedures for requesting a temporary clerical employee, links to EEO complaint and grievance procedures, tips for resolving disputes, options and procedures relating to health/life insurance, retirement, TSP and injury compensation elections and benefits, and HR-related forms. The list goes on and on. From these areas, you can link to many other hot spots such as: the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), OPM job information, Health Plan brochures, the Social Security Administration, and many other sites. Please feel free to continue to contact us by phone or e-mail. The general office phone number is (202) 767-3031; DSN 297-3031, but each HRO staff member has a direct dial number that is available from various directories, including the NRL Organizational Index and the NRL Locator Service at <http://netgroup.nrl.navy.mil/cgi-bin/whois.mail-serv>.



**The Groundhog saw
his shadow!
Six more weeks of
bad weather!**



Human Resources Service Center Contacts:

Branch Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Email: BENEFITS_NE@ne.hroc.navy.mil

Health Insurance Benefits:

Email above address or call Duwanda Chavis on (215) 408-5619; DSN 243-5619

Life Insurance/TSP Benefits:

Email above address or call Diane Barrett on (215) 408-5065; DSN 243-5065

Retirement Benefits:

Email above address or call Ken Bluford on (215) 408-5069; DSN 243-5069

Message to Employees Who Made a Health Benefits Open Season Enrollment or Change

If you enrolled or changed your enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program during the open season that was held from November 13 through December 11, 2000, your enrollment or change became effective on January 14, 2001.

Due to the heavy volume of FEHB enrollment changes during the open season, health insurance carriers can take as long as three months to mail identification cards to new subscribers. If you should need medical treatment before you receive your card, provide your physician or hospital with the certified copy of the SF-2809, Health Benefits Registration Form, that you received from the Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE). Please note that most pharmacies will not accept the SF-2809. If you need to fill a prescription before receiving your card, we suggest that you pay for it and, upon receipt of your card, make a claim to your health insurance carrier.

If you have any questions, please call the HRSC-NE on 215-408-5619 or DSN 243-5619.



LATEST TSP RETURN RATES

Month	C Fund	F Fund	G Fund
Feb 00	(1.93%)	1.22%	0.53%
Mar 00	9.74%	1.32%	0.55%
Apr 00	(2.98%)	(0.29%)	0.52%
May 00	(2.05%)	(0.03%)	0.54%
Jun 00	2.44%	2.07%	0.53%
Jul 00	(1.56%)	0.89%	0.53%
Aug 00	6.19%	1.46%	0.52%
Sep 00	(5.27%)	0.64%	0.49%
Oct 00	(0.40%)	0.66%	0.51%
Nov 00	(7.87%)	1.65%	0.48%
Dec 00	0.50%	1.86%	0.48%
Jan 01	3.55%	1.65%	0.46%
Last 12 Months 02/2000–01/2001	(0.93%)	13.90%	6.32%

Announcement of Awards

Nominations for the following awards are due as indicated below to the NRL Human Resources Office, Code 1850, or the ONR Training Branch. Contact these offices for detailed criteria.



Warner W. Stockberger Achievement Award

Due April 1, 2001



The purpose of this award is to recognize and honor a person in public or private life who has made an outstanding contribution toward the improvement of public personnel management at any level of government. Employees exhibiting the following attributes and achievements are eligible for nomination: (1) encouraging acceptance of personnel administration principles as an aid to better management; (2) skillful application of personnel administration principles to any group of employees; (3) leadership in favor of sound personnel principles by developing, sponsoring, or promoting progressive legislation; (4) leadership in developing creative responses to new and unusual challenges in personnel management; and (5) distinguished teaching, authorship or research.

William T. Pecora Award

Due April 1, 2001



This award is presented annually to recognize outstanding contribution by individuals or groups toward the understanding of the Earth by means of remote sensing. The award is sponsored jointly by the Department of the Interior and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Any individual or group working in the field of remote sensing the Earth is eligible to receive the award.

The following award nominations may be submitted at anytime:

Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Award (DCSA)

This is the highest honorary award that the Secretary of the Navy may confer upon a civilian employee of the DoN. Bestowal is on a highly selective basis to employees who have distinguished themselves by extraordinary service or contributions of major significance to DoN.

Navy Superior Civilian Service Award (SCSA)



This is the highest honorary award that the Chief of Naval Research may confer on a civilian command employee. This award will be granted to recognize superior civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in exceptional values and/or benefits to the DoN. This is the second highest honorary award under the Navy Incentive Awards Program.

Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award (MCSA)

This is the highest award that the NRL Commanding Officer may confer on a civilian employee. This award will be granted to recognize meritorious civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in high values and/or benefits to DoN. This is the third highest honorary award under the Navy Incentive Awards Program.

Navy Award For Distinguished Achievement in Science

This award is granted by the Secretary of the Navy to recognize pioneering scientific achievements that are extraordinary and significant in nature and that contain the potential of having far-reaching consequence.



NRL Lifetime Achievement Award



This award was established for bestowal on a highly selective basis to a current NRL civilian employee or team of employees for their continual and extraordinary achievements in the sciences (or engineering) that contribute substantively to the knowledge and capabilities of the nation and the U. S. Navy during a lifetime as an NRL scientist or engineer.

NRL Award of Merit for Group Achievement

This NRL award may be given at any time for a group contribution comparable to one for which an individual would receive Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award consideration.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

*...Author
Unknown*

TRAINING NOTES



NRL Toastmasters Training

Whatever your goals in life may be, your success depends on your ability to communicate. People who can verbalize their ideas so they are heard, understood, and acted upon, possess one of the most important qualities of life.

You, as an NRL employee or contractor, are fortunate to have two Toastmasters International Clubs at your doorstep. Both NRL Clubs have ongoing communications and leadership programs in which members learn by doing in an atmosphere of understanding and friendship. A basic manual is used for the first ten speeches. Twelve additional advanced manuals cover specific areas of communication, such as Technical Presentations, Speaking to Inform, The Discussion Leaders, Speeches by Management and The Entertaining Speaker. Please feel free to visit or join either NRL club.

Forum Club

First and Third Tuesdays
of every month
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
West Dining Room, Cafeteria
Bldg. 28
POC: Dave Fromm
(202) 404-4670

Thomas Edison Club

Weekly on Thursdays
12 noon to 1 p.m.
Bldg. 207, Rm. 157 (Chemistry)
First Floor, Conference Room
POC: Leslie Chaplin
(202) 404-8105

Personnel Operations Branch Training Information

Training Coordinator: Cheryl Miller, Code 1810

Voice: (202) 767-8323

Fax: (202) 767-8311

Email: Cmiller@hro1.nrl.navy.mil

HRO Training Web Site:

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/TRNGMENU.HTM>

Employees are encouraged to develop their skills and continue to gain knowledge to enhance their job performance to better meet the needs of our organization as well as their own goals for growth. The Personnel Operations Branch of the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) Human Resources Office (HRO) continues to support and provide traditional and alternative methods of training for employees. Comments, questions and suggestions are always welcomed and can be sent to Cheryl Miller.

Training opportunities will continue to be advertised on the HRO web site, by email and in HRO Highlights. Watch for details on future training opportunities to include information on other local training. Schedules are being developed for HRO-sponsored courses such as Situational Leadership, Management Skills, Gender Communication, Visual Basics, Excel for Scientists and Engineers, C++, Unix and more.

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING

MULTI-MEDIA LIBRARY

The Computational Support Services Division (CSSD) provides NRL employees and contractors access to a variety of multi-media training material to include project management, programming, HR topics, web publishing and other topics. The media available include VHS video, CD-rom and books with accompanying diskettes. Please access their listing for further information at <http://snowshoe.nrl.navy.mil/scripts/training-library/item-listing.asp>

COMPUTER BASED TRAINING (CBT)



The CSSD and the HRO offer no cost CBT which is currently set up to run on Windows operating systems. This training will be available in the near future for Macintosh or Unix systems. CSSD will forward completion of CBT courses to the HRO for entry into employee's

Human Resources Office

training record. CSSD also provides a multi-media library (video and CD-rom) of training materials and course notes for your convenience.

If you missed the introductory class offerings and require assistance, please email Cheryl Miller. Courses include computer programming and other software, business, financial, and management topics. A complete listing can be accessed from the training opportunities link provided on the HRO web site.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT STUDY CENTER (NISC) CORRESPONDENCE TRAINING

Self-study allows employees to learn at their own pace at any location. In addition, the course materials often become invaluable reference sources after completion of a course. NISC offers more than 50 courses in English and writing, supervision, financial and project management, mathematics and statistics, human resources management, general skills and other areas. Please call (303) 236-8525 or email them at nisc@grad.usda.gov. A catalog is available at the HRO.



GRADUATE SCHOOL, USDA

The government trainer, the Graduate School, USDA, has a professional, certified staff of trainers available for a variety of training. They are increasing their Information Technology staff in order to remain current with rapidly changing topics. For further information, please visit their web site at www.grad.usda.gov or call (202) 479-4970.

In addition, they provide affordable, customized solutions to the challenges facing government managers in areas such as leadership, managing human capital; organizational change and knowledge management. For organizational development services, please call Gary Dzurec at (202) 314-3464 or visit the web site at www.grad.usda.gov/programs_services/special/orgdev.cfm.

NAVAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CAREER CENTER (NFMCC)



The Department of Navy NFMCC conducts the Enhanced Defense Financial Management Course. This 5-day course, provided at no cost to individual or activity, is intended to improve the overall technical and managerial capabilities of the DoD financial management workforce. It will be offered in the Washington DC area several times during FY-01. Please visit their web site for further information and course schedules at www.nfmc.navy.mil/edfmc.htm.

HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICE CENTER, CAPITAL REGION (HRSC-CR)

The HRSC-CR presents courses at several sites including the Washington Navy Yard. Please visit their website at http://www.donhr.navy.mil/general-donhr_training.htm. If you are interested in attending a course, please follow Registration Procedure #2 described below. A catalog is available at the HRO.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND HOSPITAL CENTER

The Southern Maryland Hospital Center offers free health seminars, workshops, support groups and on-going programs. For a calendar of programs, please call the Community Health Line at (301) 877-5700.

PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR MID-LEVEL EMPLOYEES – CLASS OF 2002



This course, sponsored by the Graduate School, USDA, was formerly called the Women's Executive Leadership Program. It provides leadership training for high-potential Federal employees in preparation for future positions as leaders and managers. This program is a year-long leadership development program that affords employees the opportunity to meet and network with high level agency and Federal government officials through the completion of executive interviews, shadowing assignments, and developmental assignments. Over the program year employees will spend about five months away from their positions. This program is designed for full-time permanent Federal employees with less than one year's supervisory experience during their careers within the Federal government. It is open to men and women at the Demonstration Project Level NP-III, NR-IV, NR-V and NO-III (GS-11 to GS-13 level) or equivalent.

Although this program will be announced in the spring, for planning purposes, the USDA nomination deadline for the Class of 2002 is July 20, 2001. Packages must be submitted through your chain of command to Code 1810, Cheryl Miller not later than June 01, 2001 in order to meet USDA deadline. Orientation for the Class of 2002 is tentatively scheduled for August 19-24, 2002. If you require further information, please contact Cheryl Miller.



REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES FOR TRAINING



As described in NRLNOTE 12410 of September 12, 2000, the HRO no longer maintains a G&A budget for generic or technical training. The courses described below in the Training Schedule will indicate which procedure NRL employees should follow to register for their course selection. Remember that submission of a DD-1556 or an In-House Nomination Form is only a ***nomination to attend; you must receive a confirmation of course attendance before you are officially scheduled to attend the class of choice.*** To receive confirmation, please remember to include a current voice and fax number, as well as your email address at the top of the form.

Procedure #1: HRO-sponsored technical training to be held at the NRL.

- Employee's division submits an approved DD-1556 to Code 1810CM. This DD-1556 must include procurement information; i.e., cardholder name, telephone number and credit card number with expiration date.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, and Social Security number and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.
- Remember that the HRO is the point of contact for registration of NRL employees for these courses. The Division, employee or cardholder should not contact the vendor directly.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge to the cardholder's credit card for the per person course fee.

Procedure #2: HRSC-sponsored generic training to be held at designated locations or the NRL.

- Employee's division submits an approved DD-1556 to Code 1810CM. This DD-1556 must include procurement information; i.e., cardholder name, telephone number and credit card number with expiration date.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, Social Security number, and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.

- Remember that the HRO is the point of contact for registration of NRL employees for these courses. The Division, employee or cardholder should not contact the vendor directly.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge to the cardholder's credit card for the per person course fee.

Procedure #3: HRO-sponsored management training or advertised "no cost" training.

- Employee's division submits an approved NRL In-House Nomination Form (HQ-NRL 12410/3 (Rev 8-96), which is available from your Administrative Office or the Forms Supply Store) to Cheryl Miller, Code 1810 or fax to (202) 767-8311.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, Social Security number, and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge back to the employee's division for the per person course fee.



Contractors and Other Government Personnel: Contractors and other Government personnel are eligible to attend HRO sponsored courses on a space available basis. If interested, they should call or email Cheryl Miller for further information.

Guard well your spare moments. They are like uncut diamonds.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

NRL TRAINING SCHEDULE

COURSE: CONTRACTING OFFICER'S REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING (To be held at NRL-SSC)

Dates/Time/Location at NRL-SSC: March 27-29, 2001; 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Registration Procedures: Procedure #3. Contact Carolyn Gilroy at NRL-SSC for further information. Course is presented at *no cost* to NRL employees.



Nomination/Cancellation

Deadlines: Nomination forms must be received by March 5, 2001. Cancellations must have been emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on March 5, 2001 or the employee's Division will be charged the per person fee of \$200.00 for a no-show fee.

Eligibility: Mr. Giancola of Procurement Training Associates will present this course. Employees seeking appointment as a COR are eligible to attend. There are no prerequisites; however, it is strongly recommended that the three-day course, Contracting at NRL: The Pre-Award Phase, be completed prior to taking this course.

Description: This course covers the relationship between contract type, contract administration and contract monitoring. The role of the COR at NRL, basic rules of contract interpretation, and resolution of problems in contract administration are discussed.

COURSE: LABVIEW, ADVANCED TOPICS

Dates/Time/Location: Rescheduled to March 8-9, 2001; 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72, Annex

Registration Procedures: Procedure #1. Contractors should email Cheryl Miller for more information.

Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines: Nomination Forms and cancellations must be received not later than close of business on February 20, 2001. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on February 20, 2001 or the employee's Division will be charged the per person fee of \$600.00.

Cost/Vendor: Durite Duplicating, Interfacing Concepts, 5402 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, TX 78751 Vendor Source 80-795-2734.

Description: LabVIEW is the top language of choice now for data acquisition and control applications. Mr. Don Jordan presents this training course for Labview users in a hands-on format to give employees the technical information they need to know quickly so that they can move ahead rapidly to apply the knowledge gained to their work.

COURSE: C LANGUAGE JUMP-START WITH IEEE-488 AND RS-232

Dates/Time/Location: Rescheduled to March 12-14, 2001; 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72, Annex

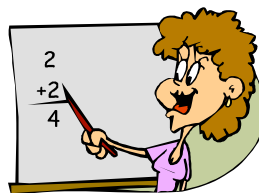
Registration Procedures: Procedure #1. Contractors should email Cheryl Miller for more information.

Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines: Nomination Forms and cancellations must be received not later than close of business on February 20, 2001. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on February 20, 2001 or the employee's Division will be charged the per person fee of \$860.00.

Cost/Vendor: Durite Duplicating, Interfacing Concepts, 5402 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, TX 78751 Vendor Source 80-795-2734.

Description: C Language is the second language of choice now for data acquisition and control applications. Mr. Don Jordan presents this training course for Labview users in a hands-on format to give employees the technical information they need to know quickly so that they can move ahead rapidly to apply the knowledge gained to their work. They will learn how to apply C Language to the IEEE-488 and RS-232.

COURSE: SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP



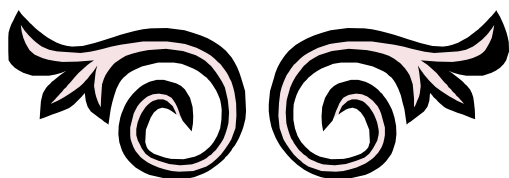
Dates/Time/Location: March 19 – 20, 2001; 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72, Rm 120

Registration Procedures: Procedure #3. Contractors should email Cheryl Miller for more information. Course is presented at *no cost* to NRL employees.

Eligibility: THIS COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL NEW SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS. Employees in Level III or above of any Career Track are encouraged to attend.

Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines: Nomination Forms must be received not later than March 2, 2001. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on March 2, 2001 or the employee's Division will be charged the per person fee of \$900.00 for a no-show fee.

Description: Situational Leadership is a model for developing people and a way for leaders to help their employees become self-reliant achievers. It is a strategy for releasing energy and creativity in the organization and for aligning individual and organizational goals. To be truly effective, a leader must adapt their style to the skills and commitment of the people they want to influence. For an employee to achieve results, managers must be able to provide them with varying individualized levels of direction and encouragement. This workshop is designed to teach supervisors and managers to diagnose the needs of an individual or group, to become flexible and responsive to the needs of employees, and to apply the leadership style that would be most productive. By developing people, managing change and diversity, Situational Leaders bring a positive climate to their organization which tends to increase morale and reduce job stress. By opening lines of communication, increasing skill development, motivation and confidence, managers and employees will feel empowered, knowledgeable, adaptable, and responsive to new challenges.



NRL Mentor Program..... Windows of Opportunity

Dawn Brown
Code 1850



Develop Which “windows of opportunity” are you seeking? Do you wish to Improve lines of organizational communication? a greater understanding of NRL’s mission and goals? Enhance your career? Or, simply build confidence through a trusted adviser?

The NRL Mentor Program can do all of these things for you, and more. The program enhances career development and fulfillment by creating a mentoring relationship on a one-to-one basis between a mentor and mentoree. Program mentors strive to promote a greater understanding of NRL’s mission and goals, provide a work environment that fosters professional and personal growth, and equip mentorees with the knowledge and skills needed to maximize their contributions to the success of their immediate organizations, NRL, the Navy, and to their chosen career fields.

The NRL Mentor Program is a lab-wide program, open to all employees at all grade levels on a continuous basis. Applications may be submitted any time to the Human Resource Office, NRL Mentor Program Coordinator, Dawn Brown, Code 1850. Questions may be directed to Dawn Brown on (202) 767-2957. Application Form HQ-NRL 12410/1 is available online at <http://personnel1.nrl.navy.mil/hrforms/>.

Military Members Eligible for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Beginning in October 2001, military members will be able to sign up to participate in the TSP. In 2002, military members can invest up to 7 percent of monthly basic pay. You can also contribute all or any whole percentage of any special or incentive pay (including reenlistment or other bonuses) you receive. However, the total amount you contribute each year cannot exceed the Internal Revenue Code’s elective deferral limit for that year (for 2001, the limit is \$10,500; it is recalculated each year and may be higher in 2002). Military participants will not receive any matching funds for their contributions except designated critical military specialties who agree to serve for six years. Your service can tell you whether your specialty has been designated as critical and whether you are eligible for matching contributions. A 60-day open season enrollment window will begin October 9, 2001, and end on December 8, 2001. Deductions from paychecks begin the first week of January 2002. For further information, go to web site www.tsp.gov/uniserv/index.html.